

COURTS OF LIMITED JURISDICTION REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

Reporting in 2005

Caseload trends presented in this and all future publications may be affected by individual courts choosing to continue, discontinue, or resume use of the Judicial Information System (JIS) for management of particular portions of their caseload. Management of parking infraction activity is often handled locally, outside of JIS.

Filings

- Non-parking filings remained fairly stable between 2004 and 2005, increasing by 1.5%.
- District court filings actually decreased slightly during that time period (1.5%), whereas municipal court filings rose 6.2%.

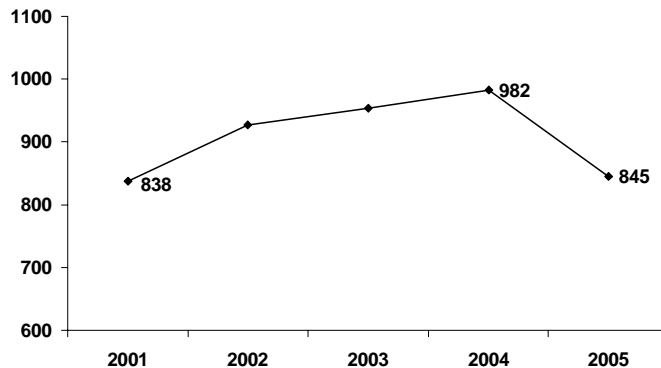
Dispositions

- Non-parking dispositions declined by 4.0% from 2004 to 2005, with notable decreases in civil and DUI/physical control dispositions (8.8% and 6.8%, respectively). The steep increase (31.8%) in small claims dispositions reflects the courts' emphasis on dismissing cases that had remained in the system for want of prosecution.

Proceedings

- Every category of contested proceeding experienced a decline, contributing to an overall 5.7% drop from 2004 to 2005.
- Show cause hearings fell by about 14% for both traffic and non-traffic infractions from 2004 to 2005. Overall, however, show cause hearings account for a very small proportion (less than 2.0%) of all traffic and non-traffic infraction proceedings.
- The number of proceedings per disposition in non-traffic misdemeanor cases has grown at a constant rate, from 2.8 in 2001 to 3.2 in 2005.
- The number of jury trials in DUI/physical control matters declined by 14%, returning to 2001 levels after increasing for three consecutive years (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. DUI/Physical Control Jury Trials, 2001-2005



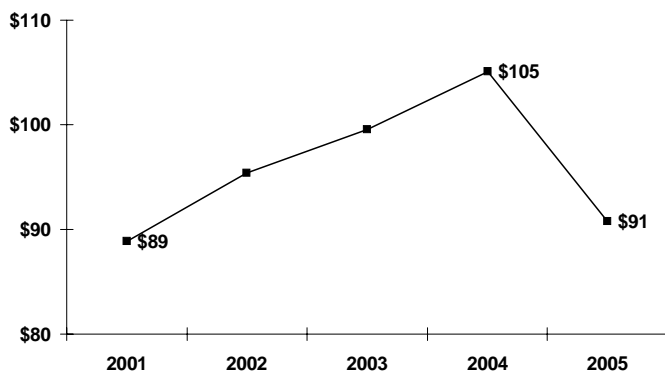
Revenue

- Non-parking revenue declined 5.5% from 2004 to 2005. The only specific case types to see revenue increases were civil and small claims.

Case Type Focus: Traffic Infractions

Filings for traffic infractions rose 3.8% from 2004 to 2005, driven by a 10.3% increase in municipal court filings. Although both traffic filings and dispositions increased during this time period, there was a notable drop (11.0%) in related revenues. This is attributable to a \$14 (14.0%) decline in average revenue for charges with a disposition of “committed,” likely the

Figure 2. Traffic Infraction Revenue Per Committed, 2001-2005



result of an increase in the failure to appear subcategory of “committed” dispositions. (Failures to appear increased both in absolute numbers, by 19%, and as a percentage of all dispositions, from 24% to 29%.) The decrease in revenue per “committed” reverses an upward trend seen in 2001 through 2004 (see Figure 2).

Case Type Focus: Non-Traffic Infractions

As was the case with traffic infractions, a 2004 to 2005 decline in revenue per “committed” (7.2%) was accompanied by an increase in the failure to appear subcategory of “committed” dispositions (from 3,316 to 5,066, or 52.8%). The reverse happened in 2004, when there was a 9.8% increase in revenue per committed and a 52.6% drop in failure to appear dispositions.

Case Type Focus: Civil

In spite of relatively unchanged filings (down 0.6%) and a drop in dispositions (8.8%) from 2004 to 2005, the number of proceedings and total revenue for civil matters increased (12.2% and 16.8%, respectively). In addition to the total number of proceedings, the number of proceedings per disposition rose as well, from 0.52 to 0.63.

Case Type Focus: Small Claims

Although the increase in small claims filings (3.4%) was relatively small, there was a one-quarter increase in related revenues (from \$268,000 in 2004 to \$335,000 in 2005).

Dispositions by trial declined 5.6%, continuing a four-year downward trend in the percentage of all dispositions reached by trial (see Figure 3). The somewhat larger drop in the proportion of dispositions by trial from 2004 to 2005 may be an artifact of the previously discussed movement toward dismissing older cases, in that the overall number of dispositions increased (especially other pretrial judgments), making dispositions by trial a smaller percentage of the total.

Figure 3. Small Claims Dispositions, 2001-2005

